

New York

New York School of Applied Design

for women

EXHIBITION
OF THIRTY-EIGHT PAINTINGS
BY THE LATE
GEORGE INNESS, N.A.
FROM THE AINSLIE COLLECTION
AND OTHERS

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NEW YORK SCHOOL OF APPLIED DESIGN
FOR WOMEN

160 LEXINGTON AVENUE, COR. THIRTIETH STREET

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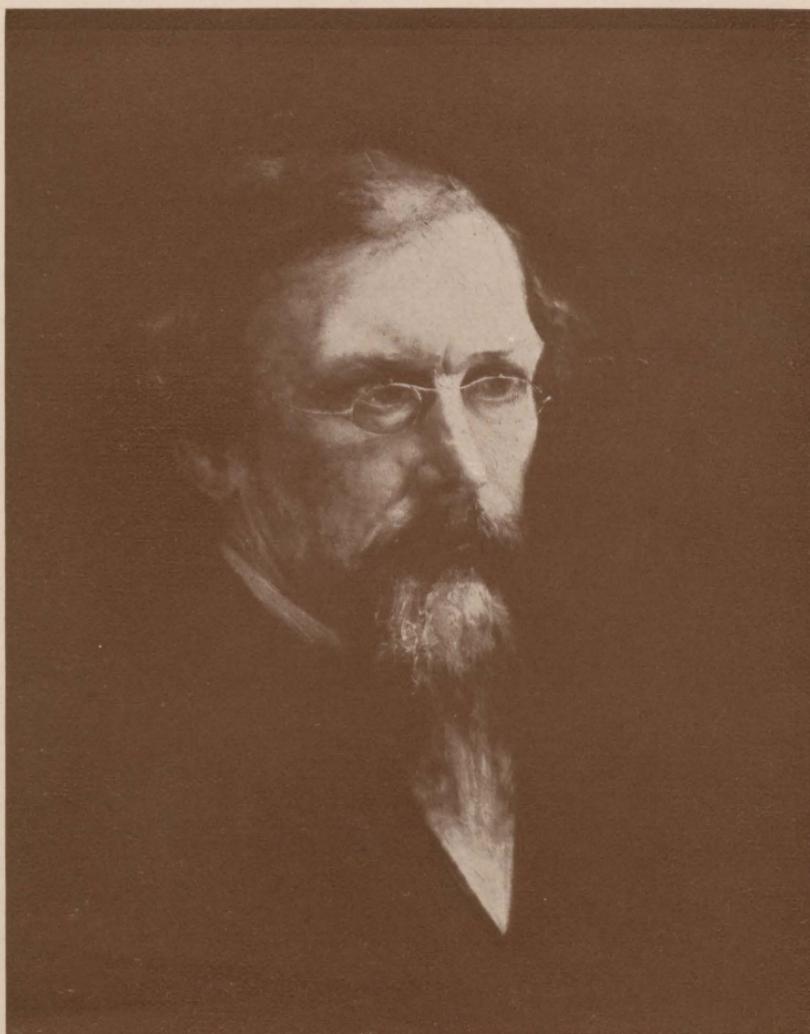
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GEORGE INNESS



LATE AFTERNOON

FOREWORD

By ALBERT STERNER

George Inness was an honest painter. That is saying a great deal and does not mean that he only copied conscientiously the nature he studied constantly. It rather means that, as clearly as he could, as directly as his means would permit at a given time of his career, he endeavored to put down in his own way his impressions of nature. His results are successful, in varying degrees. At times a great spontaneity and glowing passion leads him to give a very finished performance with the simplest means, at others, a tortured and complicated technique shows him to be in the throes of experimental metamorphosis, the habit and pleasure of the true artist.

In his early work, Inness, avid for knowledge of the thing seen, uses his brush and pencil restrainedly, and shows a somewhat photographic fidelity to the piece of nature depicted; in his middle period a desire for sense of solidity of the forms and weight of the earth, the rocks, the tree trunks, led him often to heaviness and blackish or muddy color, but in his last and great canvases where he seeks to give but the essential mood of nature, moonlight mist, sunset gloom or glow, the pigments he uses and his methods have become his slaves, and, whether before nature, or turning for his pictorial matter to the stored knowledge of years, his performance has the rare quality of artistic unity, and reaches the spectator to hold him by its untainted emotion.

GEORGE INNESS

By ARTHUR HOEBER

THE late George Inness was not only the greatest landscape painter that America has produced, but he was one of the greatest artists of the modern world, fit to rank with the best of all nations. He may also be said to have come under the head of that much-abused word, *genius*. He loved his nature and he saturated himself with it, painting best from his memory of the scene, in the quiet of his studio, where, taking his own unconventional way, he might wander into strange paths and experiments, in the end—and this is the secret of the great artist—making himself part and parcel of the performance, so that the result was nature seen through an artistic temperament. It is this that gives the lasting value to his work, that distinguishes it from the mass of excellent technical performances on all sides. Furthermore, Inness possessed a fine sense of the pictorial, knew to a nicety the value of balance, of light and shade, and he had the anatomy of nature at his finger tips, so that in later years every brush sweep was full of meaning. This was the result of a long and serious apprenticeship before nature, the making of hundreds, even thousands of sketches where every branch and leaf were depicted with extraordinary fidelity and

for the purpose of study. The road that led to his success was no royal one, flower strewn. He richly deserved all that came to him, for he had fought the battle and had been in the forefront of the fray from the start.

George Inness, of course, had an extraordinary success toward the end of his life, but in truth he was really never without a serious patronage almost from the beginning. He always sold fairly well and had strong admirers, but perhaps it was not until the early nineties that there came to be a highly serious demand for his work. Then it was that Thomas B. Clarke, Richard Halstead and other prominent collectors, seeing the large import of his efforts, began to buy all they could get from Inness, and their reputation was such that others followed in their footsteps. Finally, in 1899, at the sale of Mr. Clarke's collection, came the staggering sensation of a buyer paying \$10,150 for Inness's "Gray, Lowery Day," and the public sat up and took notice, for never before had such a figure been offered for an American landscape at auction. That same evening another splendid example fetched \$6,100! It was his "Clouded Sun." Happily these sums were not the result of hysteria, excitement or the nervousness of ill-advised bidders. George Inness had been publicly recognized, and his work stood with the best of all ages. Since that time collectors have vied with each other in their efforts to secure his work, and while naturally the man is better at some times

'than he is at others—for no artist can be always at concert pitch—the general excellence of Inness is universally admitted. The gods had called him.

It is a unique happening that the New York School of Applied Design for Women has been able to secure the present collection of pictures, all of which represent the man at his best, while some of them are among his undisputed masterpieces—and the word is used with full realization of its significance. The display of the pictures is a chance that this generation will never live to see again. That this exhibition should be offered to the general public is the citizen's great opportunity, for the show is a liberal education in itself, while in all probability there will never again be such an occasion for the collector to augment his possessions with such representative American examples. Happily, too, the collector is beginning to fully appreciate the advantages of an investment in the best of native art. It is no longer a hazard but an admitted fact that our own men are worthy to stand with the best in the world. It is not necessary to recall such names as Homer Martin, Alexander H. Wyant, Winslow Homer and others to note the increase in values which in a decade have gone up by leaps and bounds. Already the advance in prices is almost unbelievable, and the men being dead and gone, no longer capable of reproduction, is a factor that adds materially to the values.

Such a work, for example, as "Threatening," enjoys a large reputation among collectors, while

the marvelously beautiful "Mill Pond," shown at the Paris Exposition Universelle of 1900, created a sensation and instantly placed Mr. Inness in a high position in his profession. But, after all, it is a matter of individual choice largely, so admirable is this aggregation of works, and the dispersal of the collection is a distinct art event, the like of which will, it is safe to predict, never occur again in the present generation.

A WORD ON GEORGE INNESS

BY ELLIOTT DAINGERFIELD

THIS collection of pictures by the late George Inness is most comprehensive, and especially interesting. More than almost any other modern master Inness may be traced in his development with great certainty by his technical methods, in his color and in that transition which progressed from the firm and orderly objective renderings of his youth to the subtle, suave and wholly synthetic works of the last year or two, and again there are those of us still alive who have a personal knowledge of most of these particular canvases, and who are able to say that a given work was executed at a particular time and under certain conditions. This group of works is quite complete, running, as it does, from very early examples, through the later periods, to the heights when he painted with fullest power, and then on to the sweet singing which is prophetic of the final effort—even as a wave seen far away is urged onward, with ever-increasing power, lifts itself into fullest crested height, to break and lose itself in the infinity of the sands.

The poet, the scientist and the technical master are all here, and the colorist. What more can be said to make one know the value of these works as a group, except it be to express the wish that leaps into being—has leaped before when other groups have been dispersed—that the entire col-

lection might be placed in one great museum where the American people could look upon them, live with them, love them and come to know that we, too, have produced a world master, that there has lived with us, worked beside us the peer of those of other lands whose names long since became familiar, even household words, and no one of whom combined such versatility or commanded a virility with a sweetness so great as this man, our own George Inness. As I write of him—and it has been my good fortune to do so often—I call upon my memory and see the active, energetic figure, the clean-cut face with its flashing eyes, the head topped with long, even shaggy locks; I see the swift attack upon the canvas, the spread of great waves of color and the magical transformations taking place under the touch that was unlike that of any painter who ever lived. His was a process of evolution in paint (I speak of his later years), not the creation by painting on of objects. Somewhere I have seen it said—perhaps I said it myself—that Whistler's flowers seemed to bloom from his brush—and so with Inness; his forms seemed, nay, the idea did flow from the brush as one watched. What a moment ago was but a spread of cadmium now became broad sunlight, filling meadow and hillside, or, again, the strange swabble—the word is a good one—of black, apparently hopeless in its confusion, become in an incredibly small space of time a splendidly rolling sky, filled with a wealth of

billowy form and tender cloudlets—all magic, if you will, but ordered—and his very own, himself the master, and the brush and pigments merely the instruments with which he created. For its clear objectivity and directness of vision let us take the “Delaware Valley” (he painted many pictures with this title). How direct the vision and how sure yet simple is the drawing, where the few well-chosen lines give all the compositional flow that is necessary, and the darker trees, stretching out from the sloping, near hillside, sustain the sense of horizontal and impose a consciousness of perfect balance. Consider, also, this hillside with its two little fruit trees, and mark the unerring accuracy with which he has placed the little forms of haystack and house gables, so that the observer passes down the far slope of the hill to the nestling farm in the valley—the river flows safely in its bed and the far hills reach a sky line at once elusive and alluring. This is art, and when we consider that this is an early picture, are we not already in the presence of a master?

Some day some one is going to write of Inness's truth of skies, his knowledge of cloud forms, his perfect choice of *idea* in the sky represented in a given theme. We shall then see more of beauty than now when we merely say, “a good sky.” Usually it is more with Inness—it is a right sky.

In some of these landscapes, Turner alone would have presumed to use such color, and in

them the problem being similar and the interest exactly in the same place—the splendor of the sunset sky—Inness has dared to reach into the very heart's blood of the palette, and balances the western glory with a wealth of broken tone that is superb and masterly. I saw him working upon some of these pictures and know precisely what his puzzles were—to go down into the little valleys and up the far slope, keeping at all times the fullness of color in the sky. In the one case he uses a lovely green meadow, through which moves a stream vivid with the blood of the sky; and in the other a still pool gives the opportunity to catch the eye with the promised glory of the sky. Of all other objects he has sacrificed just enough—synthesized—to bring out fully the beauty of the sunset.

Two pictures which seem to stand as treasures—pictures which for their own beauty and for their method technically are without fault or hitch. They seem to have breathed themselves into being from the master's brush in swift, subtle flowings of color. In both cases they are almost if not altogether in transparent color. Drawn and painted with a consummate knowledge of theme and form, of value and mass, and executed with a love that gives them rare importance, "The Autumn Woods" and the "Home of the Heron," both masterpieces—it is not necessary to say that either is the finer—they are equally representative of those rare periods in the great painter's life when he painted

without strain the thing he felt, speaking to us in the language of line, form and color of the beauty his own soul felt, and bequeathing to all who came after him his love of the woods, the grace of trees and the charm of solitude.

If we have doubted this, is it not dispelled by the sight of such a form as the noble tree in "The Mill Pond"? How gracefully its branches drape toward the earth and how subtle and dramatic is the character in the gnarled and broken stump or log on the ground. Old tree, old tree, you, too, shall put off all that royal show of crimson robes and lie stripped, naked and broken; you, too, shall be but a log upon a damp shore! Ah, but meanwhile its autumn splendor glorifies the pond and the dimly seen mill lures us across the mirroring water to other trees and other colors, noble and beautiful! From first to last I saw this canvas painted and know how it was valued by Mr. Thomas B. Clarke, into whose hands it passed at once. And if further example be needed, both of his love and his knowledge of tree forms, shall we not be satisfied by the great canvas, "The Florida Pines"? We who know them best as turpentine pines, or long-leaf pines, know, also, the extreme difficulty of managing the straight, slender trunks, which lift themselves to great heights ere a limb leaves the stem. How skilfully has the artist massed them and how perfectly has he indicated the character in the slender near-by trees, the monotony of straight lines broken by the play of

sun and shadow. Such canvases are too precious to be estimated. They are of the nation's treasure, to be loved of the people.

We have also but to look at the great canvas, "After a Summer Shower, with Rainbow," to see him in one of those intense, dramatic moods which draw him so close to nature, and to have revealed again his power over the strange, weird light that is the accompaniment of the drama of breaking storm. No man knew storm better, and in this picture that knowledge is fully expressed. The one moonlight is superb. It was originally planned to become a part of the Potter Palmer collection, and through some change of plan it remained in the painter's studio, to be dwelt upon, changed and brought to its final perfection. It is so easy to do the pretty, sentimental moonlight—the thing that pleases. No such mood was upon Inness in creating this picture. It was the majesty of the night, its mystery and its color, that he essayed, and as the canvas grew day by day, losing under his touch all needless detail, it became a veritable poem—a moonlight sonata, indeed, and in my view one of his great successes.

It was almost his last work, and for this and for its own beauty it is very precious. Those who love Inness will dwell long with these pictures; those who would know him may learn the lesson quite perfectly among them, and those who have felt inclined to harsher criticism may well be silenced in their presence.

PAINTINGS

By GEORGE INNESS

Loaned by George H. Ainslie, Esq.



1.	Portrait of George Inness, by George Inness, Jr.		
2.	Twilight	30 x 45	1889
3.	Montclair	30 x 45	1894
4.	Moonrise in Montclair	30 x 45	1892
5.	Etretat, Normandie, France	30 x 45	1885
6.	Perugia and the Valley	30 x 45	1874
7.	Woods in Summer	41 1/2 x 26 1/2	1894
8.	Autumn in Montclair	29 x 36	1894
9.	Edge of the Meadow	24 1/2 x 18 1/4	1893
10.	Two Rainbows	20 x 30	1893
11.	Old Mill, near Riverhead, L. I.	20 x 30	1890
12.	Apple Blossoms	20 x 30	1885
13.	Shades of Evening	22 x 27	1883
14.	Sias Conset, Nantucket	21 x 17	1885
15.	Faggot Gatherer	12 x 18	1885
16.	Durham, Conn.	9 x 12	1869
17.	Durham, Conn.	9 x 12	1869
18.	Lake Nemia, Italy	12 x 18	1872
19.	Albano, Italy	17 x 25	1872
20.	North Conway White Mts.	12 3/4 x 18 3/4	1875
21.	Friends, Milton on the Hudson	16 x 20	1882
22.	Albano, Italy	11 x 16	1872

23. Valley Road	16 x 26	
24. Gray Evening	13 1/4 x 18 1/2	
25. Medfield	<i>Loaned by Mrs. C. Knoedler</i> 3/4 x 13 3/4	1860
26. Etretat	9 1/2 x 13	1885
27. Scene in Italy	9 x 13	1872
28. Landscape—Italian Water Color	4 x 8	

Loaned by Alexander C. Humphreys, Esq.

29. Return from Pasture—Milton

Loaned by William T. Evans, Esq.

30. Sunshine and Clouds	30 x 45	
31. Early Autumn—Montclair	30 x 45	

Geo Hainslie Esq,
Loaned by Roland Knoedler, Esq.

32. The Hudson Valley	30 x 45	1893 1870
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Across the Meadows. Montclair
Loaned by Mrs. John Hannah

33. Dawn on the Marsh Lands	30 x 45	1899
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Loaned by Dr. James P. Haney

34. The Bridge	39 x 45	
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Loaned by Victor Harris, Esq.

35. Italian Pines	26 x 32	
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Loaned by A. Barton Hepburn, Esq.

36. Evening in Montclair	41 x 48	
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Loaned by George D. Pratt, Esq.

37. Sunset Glow		
38. A Summer Day		

Loaned by R. R. Mygatt Esq.

39. Pequomie River N.Y.	1876
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March 21, 1912

Mr. GEORGE H. AINSLIE

1140 Dean Street, Brooklyn

My dear Mr. Ainslie

You gave me a very great pleasure in seeing the group of Inness paintings now in your Brooklyn home.

More than any of our painters he was intensely dramatic and versatile, and one can only judge the mastery of the great painter by seeing a group of his works. I may go further and say that all men who wish a knowledge of Inness, and all citizens who have a patriotic impulse at all should see these pictures. There are five, at least, of them which show us the fullness of his power, and all of them are so precious as indicating his ability, his methods, and his growth, that no praise is too great. The five or six greater ones are splendid enough to give to his name that fame which is sure to attach to it in the swiftly coming years—the greatest and most significant landscape painter the world has known. You are to be heartily congratulated upon the possession of these pictures.

Very sincerely

ELLIOTT DAINGERFIELD

